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HISTORY

OF THE

TOWN OF ASHFIELD, MASS.

VOLUME I.

BY BARNABAS HOWES,

ASHFIELD.

*Who will send a copy, postpaid to any address upon
the receipt of Twenty-five cents.*

WM. G. ATKINS, PRINTER,
WEST CUMMINGTON, MASS.

1887.



HISTORY OF ASHFIELD.

The settlement of Ashfield was, from its location, an important event in the history of our country. It was not a seaport town, nor on any river. It was on the mountains, and it seems reasonable to claim that it was one of the first mountain settlements commenced in what has become a wide-spread country. The Indians had prepared the way for the settlement of the river towns, by burning over considerable tracts of land, and they were ready for the planting of corn and beans, and the sowing of rye.

In 1745, when Richard Ellis came, the whole town was an unbroken forest, with the exception of two or three small meadows, and they were only a few acres, which were so wet as to be worthless for cultivation. On every side large trees of maple, birch, beech, hemlock, spruce and white ash occupied the soil. In addition to the hard work of chopping them down the large logs would not all burn, after a fire had raged for weeks, in a dry season, certainly not in a rainy one. Teams of oxen or horses we must not think were driven here by him. But energy and perseverance overcame these great obstacles, so that in 1754, nine years after he came here, the harvest on what land they had cleared was thought to be of so much value, that Corporal Preserved Clark, was sent with nine men to guard the people while they gathered it in. The long years of the French and Indian war brought severe trials, though in the good providence of God, no blood was shed in our town.

It is a matter of record that as early as 1753 the number of settlers was such that preparatory steps were taken to gather a Baptist church, and stated preaching was had on the first day of the week. Upon the records of this Baptist church it is written, "In 1754 & 5 they were forced to leave town for some months for fear of the Indians." I learn elsewhere that

Rev. Ebenezer Smith was in the army at Lake George in 1755, when Col. Ephraim Williams was killed. Our town had therefore, the honor of sending one soldier, and he their only clergyman, to the French and Indian war. He, according to the records, returned to our town in 1756, with the other settlers, and was married to Remember, the daughter of Richard Ellis. It is a mistake in the history of the Ellis family, that all left the settlement for three years.

THE OLD FORTS.

The Rev. Thomas Shepard, in his unpublished History of Ashfield, describes them thus:—

“After the return of the refugees to their possessions in Huntstown, the war still continuing, their object was to erect a fort for their common defence. This was accomplished on the ground occupied by Mr. Smith, and principally at their own expense. The area enclosed by the fort was a square piece of ground containing 81 rods. It was constructed of upright logs, of sufficient thickness to be bullet proof, set three feet in the earth and rising twelve feet above it. The enclosure had but one gate, opening to the south, which was always shut at night, and strongly barred.

Within the fort was the house of Mr. Chileab Smith, which served as a garrison, within which the settlers felt secure from attacks during the night. On its roof was a tower made of logs, of sufficient magnitude to contain six men with their arms. Port holes were so arranged in its sides as to afford its musketeers a fair aim at their assailants from without, while secure from their balls within. After remaining in this state for almost one year, standing on their own expenses, keeping watch by night and laboring by day with their arms by their sides, they solicited and obtained from the authorities of the colony, a company of nine soldiers under the command of a sergeant by the name of Allen, for their greater security. This guard arrived under the general order of Col. Israel Williams, in June, 1757. This company continued in the settlement until the close of the war, which was almost two years from the time of their arrival. Their duty was to go out

under arms among the people to protect them in their labors during the day, and return with them into the fort and in turns stand sentinel during the night.

In the progress of time, before the war closed, another fort six rods square was built by the settlers, in the same manner as the first, about a mile and a half southeast of it, near the house now occupied by Mr. Sears. This was William Sears, who married Alice, the daughter of Mr. Elmer.

Let us recall the condition of the settlement when these men came back and commenced erecting this fort in the latter part of February, as I infer that Buckland, Conway, Williamsburg, Chesterfield, Goshen, Cummington, Plainfield, Hawley, Savoy, and I think Adams, were covered with unbroken forests, through which savage beasts and wild, cruel and bloody men roamed. But Chileab Smith, Richard Ellis, Thomas Phillips, Moses Smith 1st, and I infer, other brave men were men of prompt and decided courage. There was another man twenty-two years of age, who had been in the most decisive battles the British nation ever fought with the French. It will be interesting to every true hearted patriot and christian to read a description of the place where he fought on that terribly bloody battlefield. He was of medium size, and had on, as we suppose, a white tow frock, as did many others. There were officers and men with red coats, and many Indians armed with muskets or spears or bows and arrows. As the column advanced, the Indians walked in their usual file; the Provincials were sufficiently drilled to march one platoon after another. A concealed enemy opened a murderous fire on them, and the brave but not over cautious Colonel and his friend, the Indian chief, were soon shot down. But some of Col. Williams' men fell back, slowly returning the fire, and among these was Ebenezer Smith, we have reason to infer. If so, he had stood in dangerous places and hazarded his life in doing service for the Province of Massachusetts. It must have been, we shall easily understand, a very exposed position to have been one in that column as it fell back in a narrow road, on both sides of which were extensive forests of thickly standing trees, and behind them Indians and

Frenchmen were in ambushment. But like David of old, the Lord covered his head in the day of battle. Gen. Johnson, as the firing grew nearer, advanced with his cannon, and demonstrated the superiority of the British artillery over that of the French, a superiority it has maintained from that day to the present time. That eventful day and campaign fitted the Rev. Ebenezer Smith to be one of the best marksmen in the fort. Surely he was a man of mark. But why should any one say, if you have had a man of mark, write and print a sketch of his life? Is it not just as interesting to have a printed sketch of the life of a woman of mark? There were three women who bore a prominent part in the duties done in those years when the forts were erected. Jane Phillips, wife of Richard Ellis, when she came to our town, had six children, and before the work of erecting the forts commenced, there were eight, the youngest a boy of two or three years. That her household cares and labors were many and severe, we can easily imagine. The wife of Thomas Phillips died in 1738, when her son Phillip was only a few weeks old, and he was reared by a colored woman. It is supposed that he had another wife by the name of Elizabeth, when he settled here. Sarah, the wife of Chleab Smith Sr., must have had great courage to live in the woods, in the great log house. I would gladly draw a picture of these women, had I the skill, but I am no artist.

Remember, the daughter of Richard Ellis, has left to us a memory like that of Moses in choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God. Great firmness and moral courage in a woman, in choosing a path for life, has a far-reaching influence. When Remember Ellis went with Rev. Ebenezer Smith to Deerfield to be married, no bright prospect of worldly gain presented itself. It was a life of danger, of wearying labors, that was before her as she rode to her wedding. The only encouraging thought would be in helping a devoted minister, who supported himself mainly by his labors on a farm. Professedly pious women often shrink from such a place, though they may by accepting it be to an untold extent useful to unnumbered multitudes.

Another man I had nearly forgotten, though he ought not to be, was an African by the name of Heber. It seems he came here when Thomas Phillips came, and it is said his wife nursed Phillip Phillips after the death of his mother, when he was but a week or two old. He owned a large and valuable tract of land west of Richard Ellis' farm. I cannot learn that he was ever a slave, or when he came to America.

F. G. Howes has copied from the records of old Hampshire County the minutes of a road to Huntstown, which reads thus, "Road to Huntstown, laid out in 1754. We met at Deerfield, began at the east path, south from the top of Long Hill which leadeth out to the old sawmill, and in said path until it comes to the path turning out northerly, commonly called Huntstown road, and on said road as it was marked by the town of Huntstown, and now commonly travelled, until it comes unto the west side of Deerfield bounds, and from thence in the northern road unto Thomas Phillips' house in Huntstown, and from thence as the road now goes, to the west side of said Phillips' lot, and from thence in a straight line to Richard Ellis' new house, from thence as the path now goes, unto Meeting house hill, unto a beech tree with stones around it, near Heber's fence, the whole road to be ten rods wide."

CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

For several years after the laying of this first road to or in our town, Heber continued to improve his lands, but Thomas Phillips having set a bear trap on Mill Hill and cautioned Heber not to go near it, he was found to be absent from home one night. Mr Phillips went to search for him with a lantern and found him in the trap, and laughing. When asked why he was laughing, he said he was thinking how the bear would laugh if it should come and find him in the trap! This careless act of his injured him so that he was obliged to give up his land to Mr. Phillips and son, who maintained him while he lived.

Mr. George Sheldon, in his History of Deerfield, has a list of forts erected by the British and the Province to protect the first inhabitants of the valley towns. But it did not appear to enter his mind to ask, did not the Indians and French have a

trail to come in to burn Deerfield in 1704, of which our fathers never dreamed? A friend has recently informed me that he had heard his grandfather and his neighbors say that the Indians stayed over night at that time on a ledge, in a swamp, in the southwest part of the town. A beaver's dam covered the entire swamp around the ledge with a large pond of water. This tradition leads me to infer that these savage men probably came from Lake George to what is now Williamstown, then through the "Notch" in the mountain to what is now Adams, then up the hillside to Savoy, from there through the north part of Plainfield to the "Ledge," and the next day went down Bear river, ready in the morning to surprise the unguarded people of Deerfield, and deal their work of death and destruction.

I have strong historical and geological evidence that there was such an Indian trail through Ashfield. In my boyhood, an older brother at work spreading a top dressing of loamy compost, struck a flinty substance and rubbing off the soil, he discovered a very highly-finished arrow head. It was carefully preserved and often exhibited for several years. At one time when I looked for it in its usual place, and not finding it, my mother said that my father had given it to the Rev. Jacob Pierson. I have often felt almost vexed with my father for this liberality of his. I had in this arrow head, evidence that in years gone by, the Indians went through Ashfield. The depth of the loam in which it was buried would indicate one hundred and thirty years, or about that. The flint of which it was made was geological proof that the Indian who lost it came from a distance, as we have never seen any stone of the kind in these parts.

After writing the above I have called on a neighbor, Joel Lilly, who showed me what he called a head of an Indian arrow. It was evidently a spear head made of flint-stone, like that of the arrow head found by my brother. I have noticed only one or two specimens like this kind of flint in Memorial Hall in Deerfield and at Williams College. From these heads made of flint-stones so similar, the inference is almost conclusive that the Indians from Canada had a trail through Ashfield to Deerfield, in some past time.

SOME OF THE HARDSHIPS OF THE PIONEER SETTLERS.

A very interesting story of the great hardships endured by the early settlers of Ashfield was often rehearsed by my father; how old Mr. Jesse Edson, who lived in a log house on the hill north of the house where his grandson Jesse died, and where R. Church now lives, came out over hills and ledges through an unbroken forest, and found about six acres of beautiful grass, which he mowed and stacked, and in the winter drew it home on a handsled for his cow. If we consider the distance from the spring on the hillside now in Buckland to Edson's meadow, on George Howes' farm, we must estimate it at three miles in a straight course, but it is very probable that he drew his hay over a circuitous route. Yet long as was the route, and severe as was the task, he must do it or let his cow starve. And then the other settlers of our cold mountain town, I conclude, instead of pitying him, looked upon him as the most fortunate among them in discovering a fine grass field, which none of them could do, except Dea. John Bement, who early settled where Josiah T. Smith now lives, and drew home hay on a hand sled from the meadow near where Friend Knowlton lived and died.

Ezekiel Bement of Buckland informs me that he has heard his father tell how his grandfather brought boards on his back to make the door to his house, also that he brought up rye in the same way, probably for sowing. From the foregoing, it seems reasonable to infer that these men when they came here among the hills did not have teams of oxen or horses the first few years.

Dr. E. R. Ellis of Detroit, in his "History of the Richard Ellis family" furnishes us with a very thrilling and affecting description of the severe labors and hardships of the men and women who early commenced our homes in our delightful and beautiful town, an extract of which is here given:—

"Few of this generation can realize the privations and dangers encountered by the heroic men and women who pushed their way into these wilderness regions. Nearly all the conveniences of modern life were unknown among them. Simple

and rude were all their implements. Going to church, to town, to mill, or on a neighborhood visit, was either on foot or horseback. Sometimes, in the spring of the year, from backwardness of the season, provisions became exhausted, and some of the inhabitants were obliged, it is said, to subsist for a time on the buds and tender leaves of basswood trees until crops could be grown. Not all even had salt for such a repast as this, and those who had were considered as quite fortunate. But in spite of all their privations, they grew up a most vigorous race of men and women, whose posterity have gone out and made a creditable mark on all the institutions of this country; and the wealth of character developed by these sturdy men and women has been a rich inheritance for their children. No privations or obstacles seemed to daunt them, and in some ways unnecessary exposures were sought and encouraged as evidences of manly strength, and in the belief that their systems were improved thereby. It is related that with some it was a lifelong custom, even in mid-winter, to jump out of bed in the morning, and without dressing, rush out to the wood pile, kick off the snow, and gather wood and kindlings for the morning fire. They fancied that by such means their constitutions were invigorated; and certain it is that many of them lived to a great age.'

Note. The subject of this sketch was a good example of the sturdy race from which he sprung. Plutarch, a Roman historian of the first century, says, "The ancient Britons were so habitually regular and temperate that they only began to grow old at one hundred and twenty years.

IMMORALITY IN THE CHURCH.

I now come to relate one of the most unpleasant trials of the good men and women who came here early to make homes for themselves and for us their descendants. I would gladly draw a veil over this part of the history of Ashfield, of old Hampshire county, of Massachusetts, and of our great nation, but I cannot do so and be a truthful historian.

In 1750 the British Parliament authorized the introduction of slaves into the American colonies. One who knew much of the early history of the town has informed me that the Rev. *Jacob Sherwin*, settled by a council in 1763, owned a negro

woman slave, and that she became the mother of a mulatto child. Suspicious thoughts arose in the minds of irreligious young men, and it is a matter of church record that some considerable difference existed between him and Dea. Jonathan Taylor. The result was, Mr Sherwin was dismissed, and Dea. Taylor resigned his office. The fact that Mr. Sherwin never attempted to vindicate his character from being guilty of this flagrant immorality would seem to be conclusive evidence against him. For if he knew he was innocent in the sight of a holy and all-seeing God, it was his duty to have joined with the church in calling a council of clergymen and laymen to examine into the truth of the reports concerning him. He did not do this, and probably quieted his conscience by thinking that he only followed the example of the patriarchs. It is an exceedingly sad truth that this first wrong step of a christian minister in sin is so widely followed, that Senator Morris of Ohio, in replying to Henry Clay's great pro slavery speech, made the bold but too truthful declaration: "Slaveholding sections of the country reek with licentiousness." The worst part of this criminal conduct of his was the fact that the clergy of Massachusetts suffered his offence to pass without an investigation and an earnest protest and solemn rebuke.

His oppressive treatment of the Baptists added to the hardships and trials of that part of the early settlers that were of that denomination. I have, through the courtesy of H. S. Ranney, had an opportunity to copy from an old printed book what presents his conduct here as arbitrary, unchristian and oppressive.

"The other instance is at Ashfield, where a Baptist church was constituted and a minister ordained in 1761, when they were a major part of the town, and they have maintained worship among themselves ever since, yet a number of a different persuasion coming into town afterwards, and a few who were there before, with the help of non-resident proprietors, bro't in a minister of their own sentiments, and have taxed the Baptist minister and his society towards his settlement, salary, and building their meeting house, for which they have forced away from them at several times to the value of ten pounds

of lawful money on each right. And though the Baptists petitioned for relief to the General Court in May, 1768, and obtained a vote that they should notify the town and proprietors of Ashfield to show cause, if any, why their petition should not be granted at the next session of the Court, and that the further collection of taxes from the petitioners should be suspended in the meantime, yet no sooner were they gone home than their opponents the next week obtained an act to enable them to lay their taxes upon lands in said town, let them be in whose hands they would, in consequence of which, they posted and sold last April, at public vendue, for a very small part of their value, mowing lands, winter grain, orcharding, one dwelling house of a poor man's, and their burying place, in the whole about 400 acres."

That this arbitrary and oppressive action of the majority of our town was through the influence of the Rev. Jacob Sherwin, I have strong reasons for believing. Rev. Thomas Shepard, in his unpublished history, expressed the opinion that the Baptists were wronged. And though I have lived here until 67 years of age, I have never so much as heard one word spoken of any good done by Mr. Sherwin during his ministry of eleven years.

SKETCHES OF THE EARLY SETTLEMENT.

Ephraim Williams settled in Ashfield about 1771. He was a land surveyor, and it is possible that he had been here to survey land before that time. His mother was a Hunt, and that family and the other proprietors encouraged him to settle on their lands and lay out lots. After five divisions had been surveyed and mostly sold, he purchased all the undivided lands in the township. He was therefore interested in the establishment of the present lines between Ashfield and Buckland. But according to Dea. Frederick Forbes' statement, the legislature without hearing him decided as the Buckland Representative wished, and lands which had been granted to Col. Ephraim Hunt and his men for services as early as 1690 in a dangerous and laborious expedition to Canada, were *deceitfully* obtained by leading men of Buckland. Not only was

Ephraim Williams Esq. wrongfully deprived of undivided lands he had bought of the proprietors, but parts of lots No. 25 and 26 in the second division were annexed to Buckland. From all the evidence I can find, lot no 26 in the division was the lot on which Aaron Lyon 2d first settled, and it is difficult to prove that the house in which Mary Lyon was born was not on the north end of it, but it may have been a few rods to the north. The present town line takes some thirty or forty or fifty rods of the length of that lot into Buckland. The grant to Col. Hunt was six miles square, west of Deerfield, and if Ephraim Williams had had justice done him, some of the naturally best land in Buckland would have been his. The apple and sugar orchards of his great grandson, Willie Williams, are among the very best in the western part of the state. Then the families that settled on these lands, though incorporated with Buckland, have for most of the years sent their children to an Ashfield school, though they could have no voice in the location of the schoolhouse or roads.

WHAT NAMED OUR TOWN?

In 1824 my father bought about seventy-eight acres of wild land. A year or two after, I went up where the men were getting ready to make sugar. They had found a plenty of tall white ash trees, and had cut down several of them and were making sap troughs. This they did by cutting them into logs two or three feet in length and splitting them into halves and then chopping out a trough in each half. These small troughs were set on the side of the maple trees to catch the sap as it flowed. Then at the two boiling places they made large store troughs of large and nice white ash logs; I think they would hold from four to six barrels each. As these troughs were only turned over and left out in storms and sunshine the year round, they decayed; and in a few years more must be made. Therefore, for sugaring, all over our town there was a call for white ash trees from its first settlement to 1826. We may well imagine that when Richard Ellis, Thomas Phillips and Chilcab Smith Sr. came up from the pine and chestnut lands of the river towns, and saw the sugar maples and white ash trees thickly mingled together, they were filled with delightful an-

ticipations of having the warm sugar to eat on their corn puddings. For corn puddings was a favorite article of food with them, especially if they could have maple sugar, but they then could not have the sugar without the ash troughs.

My description of two ash trees on this wild land, cut by my father, may seem incredible. One made four logs eleven or twelve feet long, and the smallest one at the top measured 3 feet and 8 inches in diameter. Yet large as these trees were the timber was of the best quality for carriage making. Then a large quantity of ash was used for fence rails, and a variety of other purposes. Besides the white ash, there was in the swamps a great quantity of black ash, used for making baskets and bottoming chairs.

There was, therefore, a propriety in naming our town Ashfield, and we may suppose that it received that name before its incorporation, from many who came from the pine, oak and chestnut forests of the valley. But the abundance of ash trees may not have been the only reason for petitioning to have it incorporated by the name it was. I have seen in some history that it was named Ashfield because Lord Thurlow was a native of the town of Ashfield in England. And it is not improbable that it might have suggested a motive to the Rev. Jacob Sherwin why he should use his influence to have it so named, to gain some favor from the British Minister. Hence we may safely come to the conclusion that there were two reasons for adopting the present name.

A FEW ANECDOTES

of practical value have often been told me. A Mr. Allen was walking about near the top of Pumpkin Hill, and saw a black bear coming up its very steep east side directly towards him. Fortunately he had presence of mind to start a rock rolling down, which struck the bear against a large tree and killed the ferocious beast. Such were the dangers to which the early inhabitants were exposed, and such were the providences that delivered them.

Samuel Howes and his son Heman, about eleven years of age, came here about 1780. A very dry season soon troubled them, and the father in a fit of impatience said, "I don't know

as it will rain again in my day or Heman's."

It is a popular theory with some that cutting down our forests has increased the severity of droughts, but this speech is evidence that there were severe droughts more than a hundred years ago, before only a small part of the forests were cut down. The driest season I ever knew was in 1826, and it afterwards went by the name of "The Grasshopper year." My father owned the mowing lot north of where my brother Geo. Howes now lives, and it was so dry, and the grasshoppers so thick, that he did not cut any hay until the latter part of September and the first week in October. Then there had been plentiful rains, and the land being new, and manured to some extent, the second crop was tolerably good.

In 1850, my brother, George Howes, raised the frame of his house. Two old men were at the gathering, too old to work, but they could tell stories. I said, a certain man had asked me what was the price of that part of the lot on the south side of the Bear swamp road, saying he wanted to build a house on it. Mr. Seth Church replied, "Why does he lie so? he don't want to build a house." Then the other old man related how he had heard one of Rev. Nehemiah Porter's sermons from the words, "All liars shall have their part &c." Mr. Porter described several classes of liars, one class of lies were the "Jocose lies." Jocose lying is a fashionable vice in our times. We can hardly take up a secular paper, be it in the country or city, that has not more or less short articles that aspire to be witty at the sacrifice of truth. Mr. Church also related how he once overheard a long conversation of Mr. Porter with a man who refused to attend the meetings of the "Standing Order." The man closed his part of the discussion by saying, "I have a right to think as I have a mind to." Mr. Porter told him, "You have no right to think wrong." A very trite and a very valuable saying.

MISTAKES CORRECTED.

After my "Sketches" were published, a receipt was found by H. S. Ranney, a copy of which I here give:—

ASHFIELD, MAY 14, 1777.

Received of the Selectmen of Ashfield for mileages from Ashfield to Ticonderoga the sum of twenty-six shillings and eight pence per man.

JOHN ELLIS, Lieut.	JASPER TAYLOR,
EZEKIEL TAYLOR,	ABNER KELLEY,
ZEBULON BRYANT,	ELISHA HOWES,
ELIPHALET LINDSAY,	ZACHARIAH HOWES,
STEPHEN GRAVES,	JOHNSON PELTON,
STEPHEN CROSS,	BESAR BENTON,
ELISHA SMITH,	NATHAN COOK,
ASA WAIT,	PRESERVED SMITH,
DANIEL MILES,	SAMROCK FLOWER,
BARNABAS ALDEN Sr.	

If Ashfield could send nineteen men in 1777 to Ticonderoga when three of her men had been killed the year before in the battle of Long Island, and two if not more were with Washington, ours must have been one of the most important towns west of the Connecticut River; few towns could do more. Yet August 16 of that year, Dea. Jonathan Taylor, his son, Henry Taylor, Joseph Warren, Nathan Chapin and Elisha Parker started promptly for Saratoga, making five more men in the service.

Dea. Taylor, advanced in years, must have been, it is inferred, one of the soldiers who went aside with Mr. Porter, for earnest prayer to an unseen Mind for help to be sent to the oppressed. I have been told that he was a strong and robust man, and the builder of most of the stone chimneys of the early years.

None of his descendants now reside in town. His granddaughter, Mrs. Dea. Bardwell, is at Northampton, with her daughter, Mrs. J. A. Woodruff.

Nathan Chapin was a sergeant in the Continental army, and was captured at Ticonderoga, July 5, 1777. Being sent with some other prisoners to cut some grass, they got the guard drunk, and concluding they had better do their own haying at home, made their escape and found their way through the woods in safety. One of his descendants, Darius Chapin, was in the war to put down the Rebellion, and wishes me to make the statement in this volume, that the town of Ashfield owes him one hundred dollars.

Jasper Taylor's grandson, Geo. Taylor, lives in East Hawley, and his brothers James and Jasper live in Goshen.

Through some mistake of mine a wrong copy was mailed to the printer, and the following items were not sent:—John Belding was the grandfather of the well known silk manufacturers, "Belding Brothers." Benjamin Shaw's grandson, Elijah, and his sister, Mrs. Jeremiah Stockwell, are at Buckland center. Ziba Leonard's granddaughter, Mrs. Albert Clark, is at East Hawley. She informs me that her only brother, Horatio Leonard, lives in Greenfield. She has also informed me that her father, Ziba Leonard Jr., was a soldier in the war of 1812, and therefore was entitled to a pension from the time the law was passed until his death, but he did not attend to it. I have recently learned that Lemuel Stocking, who guarded the Tories, lived in a house near a spring beside the path leading from the village to the house of Edward Guilford. It appears to have been a large and strongly built house. Lieut. Edward Anable commanded the soldiers who hung Andre.

THE THREE AARON LYONS.

May 15, 1746, Gov. Shirley ordered Capt. Daniel Paine of Dudley and his company to go to No. 4. After they arrived, a number of soldiers were so imprudent as to go out of the fort not properly armed, to view the situation of the place, and three men were shot, one by the name of Aaron Lyons.

It seems probable that he was the father of the Aaron Lyon who came to Ashfield, and I infer this man was one of the nine soldiers who came under the command of Sergeant Allen, to guard the Chileab Smith fort in 1757. Aaron Lyon, the father of Mary Lyon, the school teacher, was born near the close of that year. If his father was at the fort, there are no reasons for thinking his mother was there. I have expressed doubts about Aaron Lyon's ever living in Buckland, as no records or papers were found to show that he did. Quite recently, H. S. Ranney has found a certificate of intention of marriage of Aaron Lyon of Buckland and Jenima Shepard of Ashfield, dated 1784. But to present on the other side reasons for doubt, I copy here an extract from the deed given to Col. Hunt and his soldiers and their heirs:—

“A plat of twenty three thousand and forty acres of land, laid out by virtue of a grant made by the Great and General Court of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, made to the Officers and Soldiers under the command of Col. Hunt in the Canada expedition of 1690. Said land is bounded as follows: East on Deerfield; bounds on all other sides, unappropriated lands. Beginning at a stake and stones on Deerfield West bounds, from which we run North 32 degrees East 2240 perches to Deerfield River, thence West 17 degrees South 1730 perches, thence South 22 degrees West 2130 perches, thence East 20 degrees South 1760 perches to where we began.

Surveyed by the Needle of the Government, May 18, 1736. Protracted by a seal of three hundred perches to an inch.

NATH. KELLOGG, Surveyor.

A true copy.”

Dec. 19, 1736. Read and ordered that the Plat be accepted, and the lands therein described and delineated be and are hereby confirmed to the Officers and Soldiers of the company in the Canada Expedition under the command of Captain Ephraim Hunt, deceased, and to the heirs, legal representatives and descendants of such of them as are since deceased, and to their heirs and assigns forever, they fulfilling and

performing the conditions of the grant, provided the plat exceeds not the quantity of six miles square of land, and does not interfere with any former grant."

With this paper before us, we can see that the grant of Huntstown was six miles of land on the west side of what was then Deerfield, now Conway, running North 22 degrees East. Now it is doubtful to my mind if the distance is six miles where Ashfield and Conway join before we come to Buckland line. If not, Buckland has only a fraudulent grant to some part of the land that town claims within its limits. The Great and General Court had no moral or legal right to grant in 1779 or 1808 what that Court, Dec. 19, 1736, had "confirmed forever" to Col. Hunt and the soldiers of his company, and his and their heirs.

As the descendants of Col. Hunt and his soldiers are quite numerous in Ashfield, the history of the Canada Expedition is an interesting and important part of our town, and ought not to be omitted.

Let us go back one hundred and ninety seven years in the history of our Commonwealth and of our Country, and take a clear and full view of the sacrifice, dangers and exposures of the men who sailed from Boston to capture Quebec. The French and Indians had made incursions into frontier settlements of New York, New Hampshire and Maine, killing men, women and children. Hoping to break down the power of the French on the north of them, this expedition was sent up the St. Lawrence River. Although it failed to accomplish all that was desired, it is rational to conclude that it checked the frequency of the bloody incursions, and so saved the lives of some of our ancestors. After their return from the privations and hardships of the long and dangerous voyage to Weymouth to their homes, their wages were not paid for the long period of forty-six years, and then paid in woodland. That one hundred and fifty years ago, surrounded on all sides by other woodland, with no road only a trail down Bear river, could not bring a very high price.

In a short conversation with George William Curtis the evening after my "Sketches" came from the printer, he pointed out only one mistake, that of giving credit to Hume for the extract on page 7. Mr. Curtis thought it was Smollet's books but I am unable to find it among them. It was written by a far more talented author, David Hume or T. Smollet. Robert Bissett L. L. D. See Vol. 1.

The printer, on page 11 of the Sketches, 7th line, has instead of Northfield, North Ashfield; on page 9, 16th line, adapted instead of adopted, and page 17, 9th line, St. Leger is printed Leyer.

A more careful examination of records and old papers has convinced me that a mistake has been made about the time our town was settled. We can hardly suppose that the men to whom this grant was made waited nine years before they took possession of it. We also have proof on "The Records of the Proprietors," which convinces me that the settlements here were commenced in 1737 or 8.

The heirs of the soldiers who settled in town were Ephraim Williams, whose mother was a Hunt, and I infer the daughter or granddaughter of Col. Hunt. His descendants are numerous and so are Thomas Phillips' whose father, John Phillips, was a soldier in the Canada Expedition. Richard Ellis' wife, Jane, was also his daughter.

GEOLOGY.

What Geologists call Mica slate are the rocks on which the soil of Ashfield rests. They stretch north to the State line, south and west through Goshen, Cummington, Plainfield and Hawley. This kind of rocks are evidently very old. According to the theory of Agassiz they were among the first thrown up. To his theory there is only one objection, that which can be made to all the theories of the advocates of evolution as the first cause. We have no scientific reasons for inferring that the rocks which form the Green Mountains were thrown up, more than that they were thrown down. For aught the most learned man knows, they may have come from another globe. *But that they are very old, it does not seem that any intelli-*

gent person should question, and perhaps Agassiz is right in claiming that they are the oldest part of the solid surface of the globe. On top of these vast piles of hard slate, there is occasionally found black sandstone rocks. The elder President Hitchcock put them down on his chart as limestone, tho' they yield only a small per cent of lime. Prof. Dana in a scientific paper says he has profoundly studied the marble rocks of Berkshire County, and is led to adopt the theory as a scientific truth, that the marble is older than the hard slate stone of Franklin County. Yet there are certain marks which go to show that the black sandstones are older than the white marble. They lie on top of the hard rocks which form the Green Mountain range, beginning north in Canada, as I infer, and comes down to Conway, Mass. White flintstone crystallized rocks are quite plentiful in some parts of Ashfield. The largest collection of them is on the Joseph Vincent hill, south east of the house of Levi Vincent. It is not unreasonable to suppose that they will at some future day be manufactured into useful articles, and so become of value. Most of these white stones appear to have been brought from a distance and scattered over our hills and valleys.

HOW ASHFIELD PLAINS WERE FORMED

is a study to every Geologist in the world. The theory that commends itself to us as the most rational, is that in the remote past vast masses of ice moved over New Foundland, New Brunswick, Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, and slowly but surely moving from Northeast to Southwest, their enormous weight ground the hard rocks into sand and gravel, breaking off stones and even large rocks. When a part of this field of ice struck the east side of Ashfield mountain it advanced no farther to the South or West, but rapidly melted, leaving the sand, gravel and cobble stones which form the foundation of the level land on which our beautiful village is built. What is of the highest interest is the indications that the ice melted very rapidly some six or seven or eight thousand years ago. If the ice had melted slowly, the sand, gravel and cobble stones would have been scattered over a

very much larger tract of land than they are now found to cover.

Three places have been found where granite has been, or can be quarried; but the question, how it came where it is, has never been answered. These may have been large blocks brought from a distant mountain, or they may be a part of an extensive ledge formed below and before the hard slate rocks.

ADDITIONAL MATTER AND MISTAKES CORRECTED

I supposed I had previously mailed to the printer the following paragraph, and I now give it, with additional matter.

Ebenezer Forbush moved to Ashfield soon after Shay's Rebellion, and was a cavalry man in the latter part of the Revolutionary war. I remember of hearing him tell about his coming up from Upton, under the command of Gen. Lincoln, to suppress the Shay's Rebellion, and how when some of the insurgents crawled under barn floors they stuck pitchforks into them. His son Daniel changed the family name to Forbes. This Daniel Forbes wrote short pieces of poetry for the papers, and editors seldom or never dropped them into the waste basket. It is proposed to gather up what he wrote during his long life and publish it in a volume to be placed in Sabbath school libraries. I am sure it would be more profitable reading than silly love stories too often found in them. He and his son, Dea. Frederick Forbes, moved to Buckland a few years before his death. Savina, his sister, left a son, Ebenezer F. Orr, living at Long Prairie, Minn. Lydia, a younger sister, left one son, Alvah Taylor, living at Buckland. Zebulon Bryant's descendants, William and Calvin, are living on or near the old homestead.

One name of a Revolutionary soldier who died in the army has been told me, that of Daniel Perkins, brother of Timothy Jr.

So far as we can ascertain Barnabas Alden Sr. came to Ashfield in 1776. His descendants do not remain in town, but those of his sister Susannah, who married Mark Howes, are well known. She was a faithful and patient wife and mother and highly esteemed by her neighbors. As she was a little girl of three to five years on the eventful morning of the 14th of May, 1777, when the nineteen men left Ashfield for Concord, it is worth a passing thought to imagine her feelings as her brother left home on a dangerous way, perhaps never to return. Surely the sufferings and trials of war are not all borne by the men who go into the army. The wife the mother and sister tremble as they think of the wounded or dying father, husband or brother, on the battlefield, trodden down by the red coats or cruel Indians.

Jonathan Sears Sr., his grandson, Joseph Sears, tells us, was a lieutenant in the army, and a few days before the birth of his son Jonathan, he had a furlough and came home to his family for a short time.

Daniel Miles Sr., it is said, was of Irish descent. His sons were Ezekiel, Daniel and Franklin. The descendants of Ezekiel are living in town, and those of Daniel are Mrs. William Fuller and sons William and Henry, Mrs. Sullivan Longley and sons, Lewis and Edwin. Mrs. Lewis Sears is living in Wisconsin, and their brother Alanson Miles, who has been living the past summer at his nephew's, Henry Fuller's. I have been thus particular to write of Daniel Miles Sr., for I am convinced that he was an Irishman, and it is desirable to remind the Irishmen of the present time of what one of their number did for the cause of freedom in 1777.

A JUST AND HONEST CLAIM.

Abigail, the daughter of Joseph White, married Kimball Howes 2d, and came to live at Ashfield about 1804. Her father had a claim upon our national government. The continental currency was extensively counterfeited, and Congress offered a reward for the discovery, arrest and conviction of the counterfeiters. Joseph White brought a gang of them to justice, and so greatly helped the finances of the country, but neither he or his descendants have obtained the reward. But a year or two before the war to maintain the Union, Abigail, encouraged by the Rector of the Episcopal church succeeded in proving the claim before the Court of Claims. The war, however, made it difficult, if not impossible, for the government to pay even a just claim. Now it would be greatly for its prosperity to have it honestly and promptly paid. For the descendants of Joseph White are, and have been for years greatly in need of the money; then the credit of a man or a nation is injured when they neglect to look up all honest claims, therefore when an emergency comes they are obliged to pay a higher per cent, or what is worse, suffer loss. The war to crush secession was needlessly protracted, and many *valuable lives lost*, because our Presidents, Senators and

Congressmen had not a reputation for looking up and paying all just claims.

A TRUTHFUL HISTORY OF THE NATION.

No one has a correct and truthful knowledge of the history of the nation and of the cause of freedom without carefully reading the history of Ashfield and Deerfield. From a book of history for schools, published by Charles A. Goodrich, I copy an extract:—"During the Third Congress a law was passed prohibiting the slave trade from American ports. The first slaves, about twenty in number, were brought to Virginia in 1619 by a Dutch ship. The importation of them gradually increased, and though principally bought by Southern planters, slaves were soon found in all the colonies. Opposition to the traffic appeared very early in the colonies, but it was countenanced by the English government and thus introduced into, and fastened upon, the country without the power on the part of the colonies to resist it".

A more incorrect and deceptive paragraph is rarely found upon the pages of history. Mr. Sherwin, the Congregational clergyman at Ashfield, had power to resist the buying of a slave woman in 1763. So Dr. Bartlett's father had the power to resist buying the negro boy known in our town after the Revolutionary war as "Old Peter". Mr. Williams, another Congregational clergyman, of Deerfield, writes of having a negro man whom the Indians killed when under the effects of rum found in town. We may fairly infer that the clergy in Massachusetts and Connecticut had negro men and women as did some doctors.

On the pages of inspired history the grievous sins of David, Solomon, Abraham, Jacob and Peter are not concealed. We therefore learn that it is our duty to confess that the practice of holding men and women as slaves was fastened upon the country by those who brought the Africans here. The colonists could have abolished the slave trade at any time if they had persistently refused to buy slaves. Then the motive early prompting opposition to the slave trade was far from being disinterested love of humanity.

For it was soon understood that the importation of slaves from Africa diminished the profit on slaves raised in the United States of America. Mr. Goodrich does not have the courage to record the truth that there was no opposition to the internal slave trade until the anti slavery organizations of about 1834 or 5.

Alvin Hart's grandfather, Peter Hart, was a Hessian soldier in Burgoyne's army. He escaped from the not very vigilant watch of the Yankees and settled in Western Massachusetts. His grandson, the well known wall layer and "stout hand" is proof that the German soldiers in the army of the North were large, stout and athletic men, forming a selected force to invade our country.

ERRATA.— On pages 14 and 15, the printer made a mistake in the names of Jasher Taylor, Lamrock Flower, and Bezer Benton. Page 16, sixth line, the word "no" should be omitted. Page 12, instead of Allen read Alden. Page 21, 18th line, instead of Savina, read Lavina. On Page 3, it should read, William Sears married Annas Ames.

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